

2018 FOOTBALL GUIDE ISSUE

# Aggieland

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## ALSO INSIDE

COACH'S NIGHT  
NICK STARKEL Q&A  
SOCCER PREVIEW  
"BIRD'S" EYE VIEW  
AND MORE...

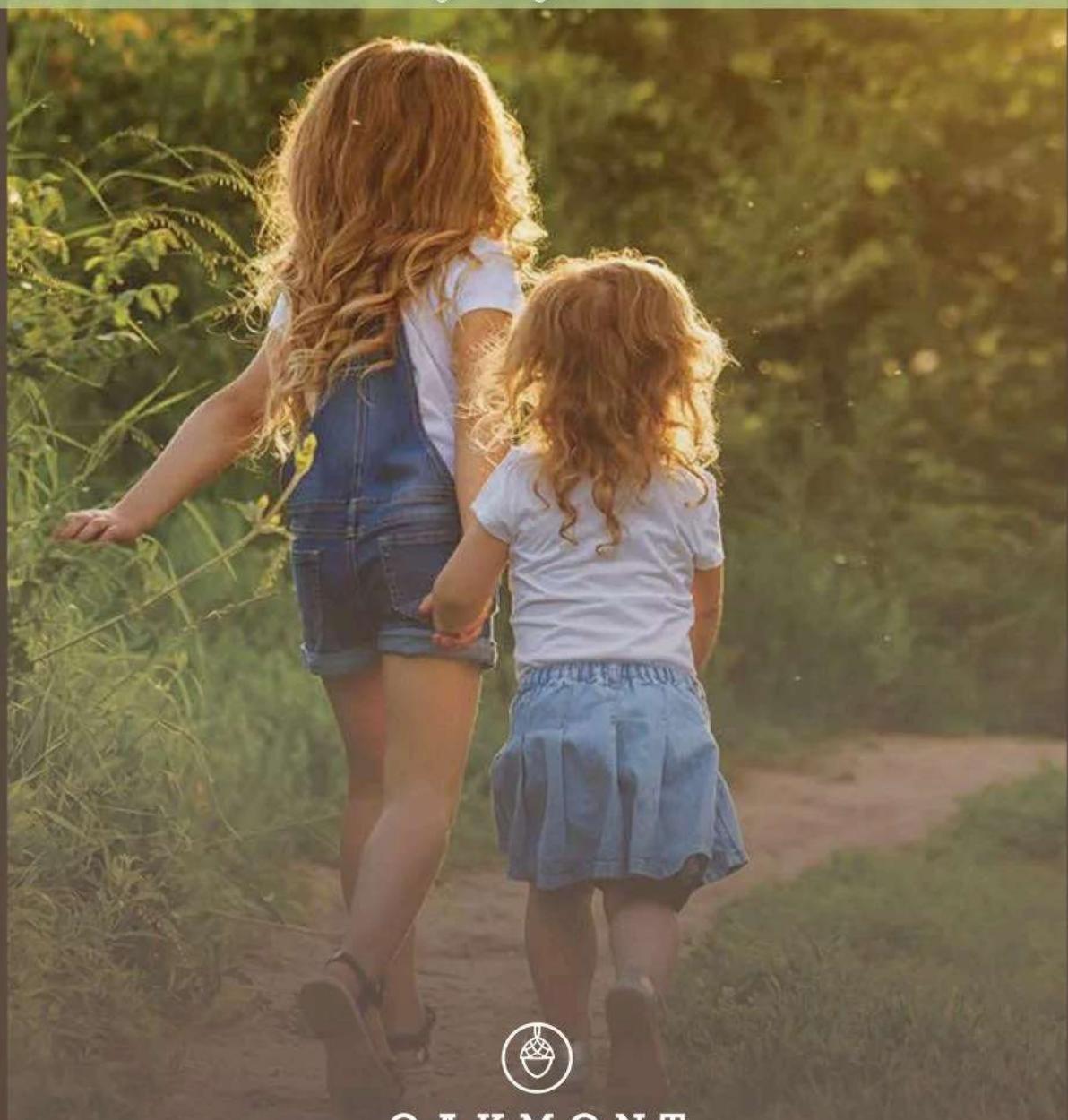
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**On the Cover:** Running Back Trayveon Williams goes through fall camp drills with a host of other backs. Many experts believe under the new system Williams could be a dark horse for the Heisman. Photo by Rob Havens '88

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# Howdy Ags!

The wait is finally over! It's time to see some Aggie football. I'm super excited to see how all the hard work our team has put in over the spring and summer translates onto the field this fall. According to the players, this has been the toughest fall camp that they have endured. Coach Fisher and his staff pushed the players to see how they handled things when they were physically and emotionally tired.

Jimbo has been very pleased with the effort and attitude of the squad. Both quarterbacks, Kellen Mond and Nick Starkel, have raised their level of play and made it hard for the coach to decide on a starter.

Our team is loaded with talent and several players have talked about how much closer this team is compared to previous years.

Jimbo has brought in a number of great speakers to address the team before the upcoming season such as Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell, whose story was portrayed in the movie Lone Survivor; Marcus Spears, who played for Jimbo at LSU and Hall of Famer Marcus Allen, who won a Heisman, a National Championship and a Super Bowl Championship. It looks like Coach Fisher wants his team to hear from winners so they can develop a champion's mentality.

The sports year has already begun even before students start their first classes. Our soccer team is already in mid-season form having opened up the regular season in Hawaii with two wins followed by two games at home. Fish Camp Night at Ellis Field was a blast once again as new freshmen got to try out their yells for the first time.

Our volleyball team traveled to Europe this summer to compete and grow as a team and then started their season in Ohio where they won 2 out of 3 matches. I'm looking forward to seeing our new squad under the direction of our first-year head coach Laura "Bird" Kuhn.

I want to wish all of our teams' good luck as they compete this fall. I look forward to seeing the 12th Man fill up stands and cheer our programs on to victory!

Gig'em Ags!

*Rob '88*



For real-time updates on all things Aggie sports, be sure to follow us on Instagram (@aggielandillustrated) and Twitter (@aggiemag).

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# Aggieland

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snapshot



## **o-line...**

The key to our team's success could be the five offensive linemen featured in this snapshot: #54 Carson Green, #78 Keaton Sutherland, #64 Erik McCoy, #73 Jared Hocker and #65 Dan Moore Jr. The Aggies will have a pro-style offense that utilizes a tight end and a fullback. If the Aggies can control the line of scrimmage, it will allow Jimbo's offense to rack up big points on the scoreboard. Photo by Rob Havens '88



snapshot





## senior sensation...

Emily Bates catches some air in the Aggies win over San Diego. The talented midfielder/forward from Melissa, Texas is one of the leagues best players. She is one of three tri-captains chosen to lead the 2018 squad. Coach G complimented her not only for her amazing abilities on the field, but also for being an outstanding student, citizen, athlete and teammate. She has 45 points for her Aggie career including 16 goals and 13 assists. Photo by Rob Havens '88



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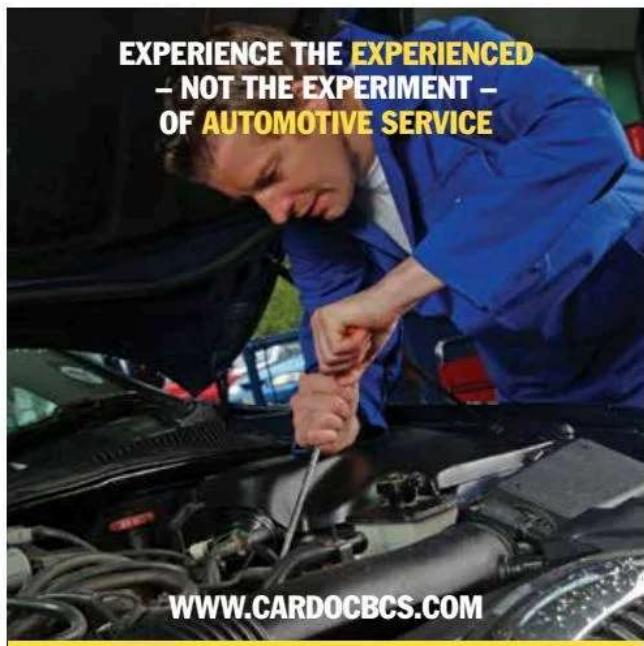
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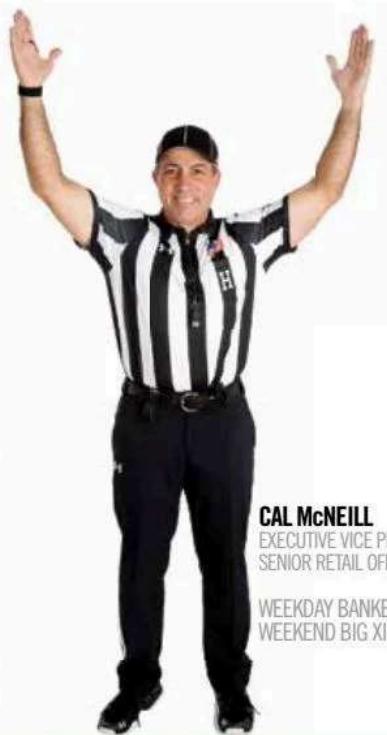
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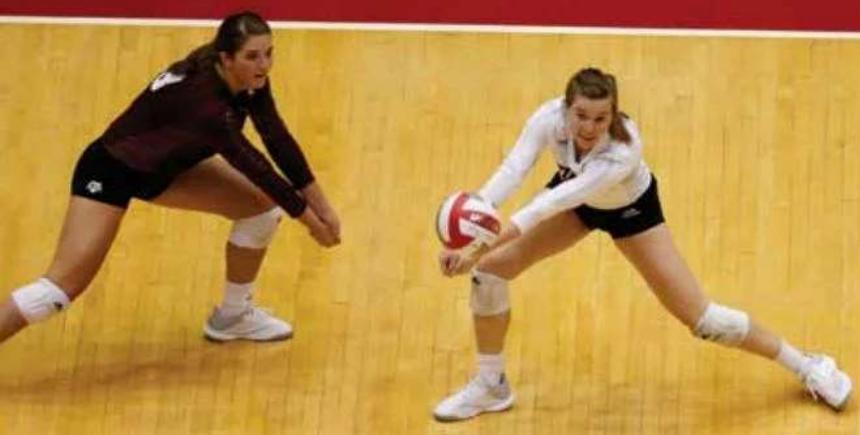
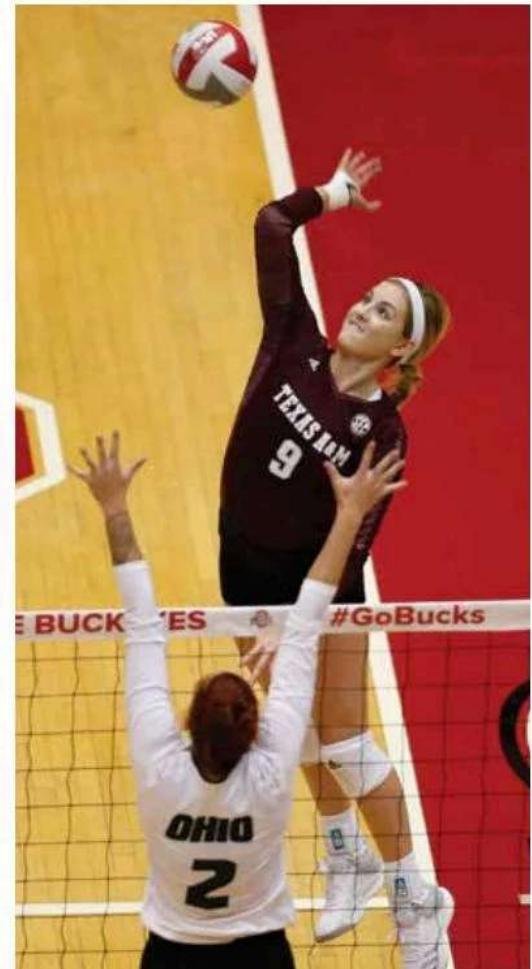
**[soccer]** Texas A&M has jumped out to a 4-0 record so far in this young season. They flew to Hawaii and won the Outrigger Soccer Kickoff tournament. Then they returned home and beat a tough BYU squad 2-0 and San Diego 3-0. Including two exhibition games, the Aggies have not allowed a goal in six games. This is the first time in school history that they have gone 4-0 to start the season. Ally Watt leads the team with four goals and has 14 goals in her last 18 matches. This team is stacked with talent and is already ranked #9 in the country.



scoreboard



**[volleyball]** The Aggies opened fall camp with a new head coach and a new lineup. Opening the 2018 season, Coach Bird led the Aggies to two straight wins. Hollann Hans picked up right where she left off last season by getting a match-high 20 kills in the win over Ohio University. Redshirt Junior Brookah Palmer had 16 kills in her debut as an Aggie and freshman London Austin-Roark also had 11 kills in her first match donning the Maroon & White. Coach Bird believes the key to success for this team is to outwork everyone else and that's what she plans to do.



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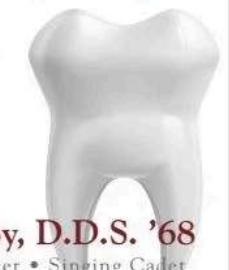
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# COACHES NIGHT

BY: CHELSEA O'NEAL '17

I don't know if it was the heat of the summer or the months-long anticipation that had built up over the event, but when Coach's Night finally rolled around, the excitement could be felt.

From every which way Aggies poured into Gilly's, the only ballroom in Dallas big enough to fit the sea of maroon, saying their "hellos" to old friends and making small talk across the impressive spread of auction items. Whether said or unsaid, there was one thing on everyone's mind: Can he do it?

Before the guest of honor took the stage, the crowd participated in a friendly game of "who has attended the most Aggie football games in their lifetime." As the facilitator rattled off former coaches of A&M, fans took a seat when they could no longer say they had attended a game in that coach's era. The winner: a precious Ol' Ag saw his first game coach by Homer H. Norton in 1943. How's that for commitment?

When the moment everyone had been waiting for rolled around, Jimbo Fisher took the stage with the same determination he has shown since the minute he stepped foot in Aggieland. As he rattled on (and I say that because he talks as fast as an auctioneer) about his time since joining the team, Aggies around the room found themselves making parallels in their stories - coming to Texas A&M and falling in love with the people, culture, and town. For Coach Fisher, his people are the fans, his fellow coaches and staff and the players.

"It's the best-kept secret in all of America," Coach Fisher said referring to the culture, "and it's not going to be a secret for long."

Coach Fisher said that having been in the business for 30 years, he's never met people more generous than Aggies. "You people are different," he joked as he thanked the more than 1,800 in attendance.

As his speech turned from friendly to football, he was sure to show his humility and appreciation for the coaching staff alongside him. Talking highly of each of his constituents he said, "I'm not arrogant, I know I can't do this alone."

In addition to the coaching staff, Coach Fisher said the connection between the administration and the athletic department must be strong in order to have a successful program. It's like running a well-oiled machine, everything has to be clicking and working together speaking to one other.

And lastly, and probably most passionately, Coach Fisher spoke about the players and the importance that building character holds.

"Talent will win you games," Jimbo said, "character will win you championships."

He spoke about fall training and the routine the team has been getting into. How habits come out in pressure so it's important to always practice the right way because as he said, "you don't win because you want to win, you win because you're prepared."

He wrapped up the night addressing the elephant in the room: a national championship. Something every Aggie football fan has been longing for. His answer? He doesn't know, simple as that.

Every day he and the coaching staff are working to create a championship culture within the program, which is the first step to getting us there but for now, Jimbo says, "I want us to be a team that you're proud of watching." And with that, everyone in the room took a deep breath because that's exactly what we came to hear. ■

NICK

# STARK

## Q&A

### What would you say is the biggest difference between this coaching staff and the last one?

I'd say attention to detail. Just the little things. Not looking at the outcome of a play but looking at the tiny details that got us into that outcome. So maybe a pass is completed for a touchdown, did I take the wrong drop? Or we didn't have a good block or we didn't run the right route and it still worked out. It's the little details that he is focusing on that we need to get better and we need to be more consistent. In that, it's in the process, not the outcome. So that's really what I saw.

### Do you like the new style of coaching? Sometimes getting your tail chewed off?

It's different.

### Are you getting used to it?

I think that it's not necessarily getting used to it. It's letting it go off your back. Because it's not always what he is saying or how he is saying it, there are some coaching points in there but a lot of the times it's just a mental game. He's just trying to fluster you, get you out of your comfort zone, trying to see what you are going to do whenever things are tough. Like he talked about when we are in our seventh day of practice, that's when Fall Camp starts. That's when he finds out who we are. Now we are tired and everyone is beaten up. Mentally you are just fried because you've been yelled at 24/7 and learning all these new plays. You got a playbook about that thick (holds up hand showing big margin). So, that's when he wants to see how we react when our backs are against the wall. Are we going to stand in there and fight or are we going to give up? That's what he is getting out of us.

### How are you feeling going into this season?

I'm feeling pretty good. A little sore, but pretty good.

### Has this been a tougher camp?

This has been the hardest camp so far. This is my third fall camp and it's been the hardest one by far. You know no breaks. Anytime I'm off, I'm doing recovery stuff. It's not been easy, but it's worth it. I think it's going to be worth it.

You have been in a quarterback battle and every move you make is going to be scrutinized. Is there pressure in knowing your fighting for your job with every single rep?

Of course, there's some pressure with everything being under a microscope. But that pressure shouldn't be a place that you play out of fear. You know fear looking behind your shoulder. Am I messing up? Oh no, did I just put a bad play on film? That's no way to play. You have to go out there and just be confident doing the small things right. Doing the basics right and being confident that the results are going to be there. That's kind of what it has been like. Every day, every practice, every rep. Not really worried is that play going to win me the job? Coach Fisher has probably talked about it. It's not about trying to win a job or trying to win a competition. It's about going out there and competing against the defense every day. I'm not competing against Kellen every day. I'm competing against the defense every day. That's my philosophy. I'm just trying to get the ball into the end zone trying. Trying to get us into a position to score, stuff like that. Instead of competing against someone else. Try to say, "I have to be better than him!" I don't think that's the way you should go about it.

**Jimbo said it's not about X's and O's it's about the guy that takes over or owns the team, how do you do that?**

I think when he says take over the team, he means the guy that's going to go in day in and day out and do the right thing on and off the field. Lead his team in a way that matches Coach Fisher's. In a way that gets guys to follow. We had a guy Marcus Spears come talk to us the other day and he was on the LSU National Championship team when Coach Fisher was there. He talked to us and said it wasn't the coaches team it was the players' team and he said until you guys get that, you're not going to be successful in this league. He said sometimes they would be out there in practice, it would be a rough practice and the players would go up to Coach Fisher and Coach Saban and say, "Hey start this practice over! This isn't how we should practice." And the coach would say, alright let's do it and they'd start the whole practice over. So when

you take that kind of ownership, that's when you'll have championships. I think it's about us taking ownership, not us going against each other me trying to lead the team one way and Kellen trying to lead them another way. It's us coming together collectively, this is how we are going to lead the team and we've had those conversations. We've had those meetings together of how we are going to lead this team.

**Do you feel like this is the best team run team you have had since you've been here?**

I've seen improvement, in specific position rooms. For example, last year Damion Ratley and Christian Kirk in the receiver room, they ran that receiver room. You know Coach Moorehead was a good coach but they were the ones that inspired those guys. I don't know if you saw Hard Knocks but if your hurting, if your hamstring is not falling off the bone, your out there practicing. That was the kind of ownership they had not in just what they did but the rest of the receivers did too. You guys are representing me too because I'm a receiver too. If the receiving corps is bad then I'm bad too, whether he had his best day ever. That type of ownership is being incorporated into our team. I've seen that in the running back room, I've seen that in the receiver room and the quarterback room we are starting to take ownership of not just our own actions but for the whole quarterback room. We do things as an offense at practice, one false start and that's one gasser so we've been having more ownership like that and its been definitely the players taking over.

**He's known as a quarterback whisperer how much have you learned in the last eight months?**

I've learned a lot! Coach Fisher has just really shown us what it is to be a quarterback in his offense. What it takes to succeed in his offense and just in life. Learning from him, he played quarterback at the DII level and he knows kind of what we are going through and he knows how to talk to us. How to get us motivated and he knows we need to do that for our team so he's been talking to us. "That's a big play you need to go celebrate with your team." "You need to tell those guys how great of a job they are doing, pat

those linemen on the butt, telling them to keep blocking for you that's what's going to inspire those guys." I don't think its just the X's and O's but it's the intangibles. He brings to the table because he was a player and because he's seen so many great quarterbacks go through his system and see how they did it. He's going to go ahead and encourage us with what they did.

**I saw him smile the other day in practice, is he a kinder gentler Jimbo this fall?**

(laughs) No, not at all. He turned it up. No, he went up another level. Turned it up a notch. I'm used to it. I need it. I think I do need it. Sometimes I'm a little prideful out there and I need someone to help bring me back down. ■





A dynamic photograph of a Texas A&M football player in mid-air, wearing a maroon helmet and jersey with "TEXAS A&M" and the number 12. He is wearing white pants and gold cleats, reaching out to catch a maroon football. The background shows a green field and stadium lights.

2018

# FOOTBALL PREVIEW

BY: ROB HAVENS '88

The new era of Aggie football under Coach Jimbo Fisher is finally here! For months there has been a wave of excitement building as our new coach assembled his staff, signed a recruiting class and went through his first spring and fall camps. Now it's time to see the product on the field.

For several years experts have talked about the sleeping giant in College Station and now it's time to see if Jimbo and his staff can wake it up. As it's often said, Rome wasn't built in a day and it will take some time for this program to mature, but it's obvious Coach Fisher has already changed the mindset around here from "Can we win championships?" to "We will win championships!"

Fisher comes to Aggieland with the reputation of building great NFL quarterbacks. So, one of the biggest questions over the past eight months has been "Who will our starting quarterback be?" For most fans, Starkel is the likely choice as his passing skills seemed to be a perfect fit for the Jimbo pro-style offense. But Kellen Mond has matured under the tutelage of the quarterback whisperer and on the Thursday before the first game

when we hoped to hear who would start under center, Jimbo said both QB's had raised their game and he was confident both could lead this team.

Obviously, one will run out onto the field for the first play but both have raised their level of play and it looks like they will share the field for now. Starkel and Mond both had significant playing time last season and now will have to master the new system and show they can lead the team to wins on the big stage.

One of the biggest differences this year will be the addition of the tight end, Jace Sternberger, who has received rave reviews from the time he hit campus. Garnering the MVP title at spring camp, Sternberger is a talented transfer who has continued to get better and better. Opponents are up for a challenge with the 6'4 250 lb. junior who has great hands and the athleticism to make big plays for the Aggies this fall.

Joining Jace is another transfer who joined the Ags this summer, Trevor Wood. The 6'6 265 lb. graduate from Arizona arrived on campus with NFL abilities and fit in nicely into Jimbo's system. Watch for the Aggies to use

double tight end formations and control the line of scrimmage with a seven-man front.

Offensive line coach Jim Turner was one of only two coaches retained by Fisher from the previous staff. He has continued to mix up the guys on the line during the fall but based on the first two-deep chart the team released, it looks like Erik McCoy will anchor the O-Line once again from the center position. Senior Keaton Sutherland will start at left guard while sophomore Jared Hocker will play right guard. Carson Green will be playing the right tackle and Dan Moore Jr. will be the blindside tackle. Kellen Diesch, Colton Prater, Ryan McCollum, Connor Lanfear and Colten Blanton will provide depth for the Aggies on the offensive line.

Trayveon Williams is primed for a break out year at tailback. With a seven-man front and a fullback, look for him to carve up opposing defenses this fall. Walk on Kwame Etwi has impressed the new staff with his quickness and ability to find gaps in the running game and will be the first one off the bench for the Ags. The team has a stable of young talented running backs that will provide great

depth at the position.

The twelfth man, Cullen Gillaspia, who has been a spark plug on special teams as well as receiving some playing time at linebacker has moved to fullback. A move that interestingly enough was suggested by our Athletic Director, Scott Woodward. According to Gilly, he had already planned to move to H-back before Jimbo arrived and Woodward asked him one day, "Would you ever consider fullback?" Cullen approached Fisher with the idea and now he will start at the position this fall.

Jhamon Ausbon returns with the most catches from a year ago. The talented sophomore is ready for another great season. Quartney Davis, who has suffered from injuries since arriving on campus, had an amazing camp and locked down a starting role. Camron Buckley, Kendrick Rogers and Hezekiah Jones lead a talented group of young receivers looking to make a difference in the pro-style offense.

Mike Elko starts his Aggie career with a talented defensive line. Justin Madubuike and Daylon Mack anchor the middle and Jayden Peevy and TD Moton will back them up. On the ends, Landis Durham and Kingsley Keke will bookend the front line and Tyree Johnson and Bobby Brown will be reserves. Madubuike has been mentioned a couple of times by Mond and Starkle as the 6'3 300 lb. tackle that chased after them during live drills in the spring. Mack brought a ton of expectations when he arrived on campus and seems to be ready to perform more on a consistent basis for his final year.

The Aggies linebacking corps includes Tyrel Dodson, Otar Alaka and Anthony Hines III. They take the field with a ton of experience and the success of the defense could fall squarely on their shoulders. Backing them up will be Buddy Johnson, Larry Pryor, Riley Garner and Braden White.

Playing on the corners will be Charles Oliver and Deionte Renfro. Texas A&M is becoming Defensive Back U and a host of young talent will be used this fall. Junior Roney Elam and Clifford Chattman will protect the corners as well. At safety, the Aggies get a huge boost with the return of Donovan Wilson who missed all of last year with an injury. Look for him to bring a ton of energy to Elko's defense. Derick Tucker will start at the other safety spot and DeShawn Capers-Smith Leon O'Neal Jr. and Keldrick Carper will

all see playing time.

On special teams look for "Mr. Texas Football" Roshauud Paul to create excitement in the punt return game. Trayveon Williams and Klyde Chriss will take care of the kick return duties. Daniel LaCamera returns for his senior season as placekicker on field goals and Braden Mann will do double duty this fall on kickoffs and punts.

Coach Fisher has a lot of young talent that should see the field this year. With the new red shirt rules, it allows him to get kids on the field and see if they are ready to contribute.

The Aggies once again have a tough schedule, facing the #1 and #2 teams in the nation in the first month but Coach



Fisher and his team are ready for the challenge. After a spring and summer under new strength and conditioning coach Jerry Schmidt, the Aggies say they feel stronger than ever. Having gone through the toughest fall camp in their collegiate career the team is prepared to show the nation that they are ready to win.

The excitement has been building for eight months and now we are all ready to watch the Aggies in action. Coach Fisher has built a foundation and now it is time to build on that rock that he has established. For the seniors and other players that came in under the old regime, it is time to turn the page and begin a new era of Aggie Football.



#### 2017 RECORD

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| OVERALL    | 7 - 6 |
| CONFERENCE | 4 - 4 |
| HOME       | 4 - 3 |
| AWAY       | 2 - 2 |
| NEUTRAL    | 1 - 1 |

#### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| AUG. 30 | VS. NSU             |
| SEP. 8  | VS. CLEMSON         |
| SEP. 15 | VS. ULM             |
| SEP. 22 | @ ALABAMA           |
| SEP. 29 | VS. ARKANSAS        |
| OCT. 6  | VS. KENTUCKY        |
| OCT. 13 | @ SOUTH CAROLINA    |
| OCT. 27 | @ MISSISSIPPI STATE |
| NOV. 3  | @ AUBURN            |
| NOV. 10 | VS. OLE MISS        |
| NOV. 17 | VS. UAB             |
| NOV. 24 | VS. LSU             |

## GAME 1

# NSU

The Aggies open up their 2018 season on a special Thursday night game at Kyle Field vs. Northwestern State. The entire nation will want to see the team under the direction of the new head coach Jimbo Fisher. To top off the excitement, SEC Nation is set to be on campus to kick off the college football season. The Demons come into College Station with a new head coach of their own as the Demons promoted Brad Laird from his defensive coordinator position last December. The new offensive coordinator Brad Smiley is known for lighting up the scoreboard with a rapid-fire attack. It looks like both the Aggies and Demons will make a game-day decision on who will start at quarterback and both guys on each sideline should see playing time. Shelton Eppler and Clay Holgorsen are the two QB's that earned the right in fall camp to play in this game for the opponent. The Demons haven't had a winning season since 2008 and are hoping the change at the top will turn things around.



## 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| AUG. 30 | @ TEXAS A&M         |
| SEP. 8  | VS. GRAMBLING       |
| SEP. 15 | @ LAMAR             |
| SEP. 29 | @ SE LOUISIANA      |
| OCT. 6  | VS. NICHOLLS STATE  |
| OCT. 13 | VS. SAM HOUSTON     |
| OCT. 20 | @ CENTRAL ARKANSAS  |
| OCT. 27 | VS. HOUSTON BAPTIST |
| NOV. 3  | @ ABILENE CHRISTIAN |
| NOV. 10 | VS. MCNEESE         |
| NOV. 15 | @ STEPHEN F. AUSTIN |

## GAME 2

# CLEMSON

Texas A&M will be tested early as our week two opponent will roll into town as the #2 team in the nation. Dabo Swinney has elevated this program to a national championship winning squad that is loaded with talent. This game will feature two of the four active coaches that have led their teams to national titles. The Tigers have what is arguably the best defensive front seven's in the country. Clemson has eight returning starters on defense and plenty of depth on that defensive line. Quarterback Kelly Bryant returns as their leading rusher from last year's team. They also return their top three running backs from last year. Seven of nine wide receivers and their starting tight end, as well as an All-American left tackle, Mitch Hyatt. They are projected to win every game on their schedule by double digits. A raucous crowd and an amazing performance will be required to beat these guys.



## 2017 RECORD

|            |        |
|------------|--------|
| OVERALL    | 12 - 2 |
| CONFERENCE | 7 - 1  |
| HOME       | 7 - 0  |
| AWAY       | 4 - 1  |
| NEUTRAL    | 1 - 1  |

## 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. FURMAN           |
| SEP. 8  | @ TEXAS A&M          |
| SEP. 15 | VS. GEORGIA SOUTHERN |
| SEP. 22 | @ GEORGIA TECH       |
| SEP. 29 | VS. SYRACUSE         |
| OCT. 6  | @ WAKE FOREST        |
| OCT. 20 | VS. NC STATE         |
| OCT. 27 | @ FLORIDA STATE      |
| NOV. 3  | VS. LOUISVILLE       |
| NOV. 10 | @ BOSTON COLLEGE     |
| NOV. 17 | VS. DUKE             |
| NOV. 24 | VS. SOUTH CAROLINA   |

## GAME 3 ULM

ULM will have their hands full in game three after the Aggies have had a couple of games under their belt and Jimbo Fisher's offense hits their stride. Though the Warhawks had one of the worst defenses in college football last year, their offense is a different story as they return quarterback Caleb Evans who threw for nearly 3,000 yards last season and added another 700 on the ground. ULM returns two of their best receivers in Marcus Green and RJ Turner and their best five running backs. They also return a veteran offensive line of six players with starting experience. The Aggies will need to keep Marcus Green on their radar, as a kick returner he averaged 32.4 yards a return. This is the kind of game you hope to see lots of players hit the field as the Ags need to stay healthy for their week four opponent.



### 2017 RECORD

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| <b>OVERALL</b>    | 4 - 8 |
| <b>CONFERENCE</b> | 4 - 4 |
| <b>HOME</b>       | 2 - 3 |
| <b>AWAY</b>       | 2 - 5 |
| <b>NEUTRAL</b>    | 0 - 0 |

### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| AUG. 30 | VS. SOUTHEASTERN LA  |
| SEP. 8  | @ SOUTHERN MISS      |
| SEP. 15 | @ TEXAS A&M          |
| SEP. 22 | VS. TROY             |
| SEP. 29 | @GEORGIA STATE       |
| OCT. 6  | @ OLE MISS           |
| OCT. 13 | @ COASTAL CAROLINE   |
| OCT. 20 | VS. TEXAS STATE      |
| NOV. 3  | VS. GEORGIA SOUTHERN |
| NOV. 10 | @ SOUTH ALABAMA      |
| NOV. 17 | @ ARKANSAS STATE     |
| NOV. 24 | VS. LOUISIANA        |

## GAME 4 ALABAMA

Bama rolls into 2018 as the defending national champion and the preseason #1 team. Surprise! Surprise! They are once again loaded with the country's best players. The only thing happening in Tuscaloosa that gives the college world hope is a quarterback controversy. Jalen Hurts led the team all year with only one defeat and was again under center until halftime of the National Championship game when Tua Tagovailoa came in and showed his throwing ability, including the game-winning throw that released confetti from the roof of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Had Tua not come into the game he said he would have transferred after the season but Hurts is on schedule to graduate in December and has no plans to leave before then. Opponents can hope that too many roosters in the hen house can rattle the Bama machine but it's not likely. Saban had to add two new coordinators during the off-season so we shall see if that creates any issues. Until someone knocks them off they are still the team to beat in college football.



### 2017 RECORD

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| <b>OVERALL</b>    | 13 - 1 |
| <b>CONFERENCE</b> | 7 - 1  |
| <b>HOME</b>       | 7 - 0  |
| <b>AWAY</b>       | 3 - 1  |
| <b>NEUTRAL</b>    | 3 - 0  |

### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. LOUISVILLE        |
| SEP. 8  | VS. ARKANSAS STATE    |
| SEP. 15 | @ OLE MISS            |
| SEP. 22 | VS. TEXAS A&M         |
| SEP. 29 | VS. LOUISIANA         |
| OCT. 6  | @ ARKANSAS            |
| OCT. 13 | VS. MISSOURI          |
| OCT. 20 | @ TENNESSEE           |
| NOV. 3  | @ LSU                 |
| NOV. 10 | VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE |
| NOV. 17 | VS. THE CITADEL       |
| NOV. 24 | VS. AUBURN            |

## GAME 5 ARKANSAS

This year's version of the Southwest Classic has plenty of interesting back-stories. Brett Bielema was let go after last season and Aggie alum Chad Morris, who was mentioned as a possible head coaching target here at A&M, was hired by the Hogs. Morris had plenty of success at the high school level before going to Clemson as OC and doing so well that he got the head coaching job at SMU. He resurrected that program and now he's been given the job to do the same thing at Arkansas. Although the Ags have beaten Arkansas six years in a row, three of those games have come down to overtime. Morris hired former defensive coordinator John Chavis to take over his defense so there is sure to be some added incentive on that side of the ball. Bielema loaded the line and ran it down your throat. Morris will spread you out and up-tempo you to death. For the first time in several years, we won't face an Allen at QB but 6'7" 258 lb. Cole Kelley who we faced on short downs last year will be under center this fall.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                      |
|---------|----------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. EASTERN ILLINOIS |
| SEP. 8  | @ COLORADO STATE     |
| SEP. 15 | VS. NORTH TEXAS      |
| SEP. 22 | @ AUBURN             |
| SEP. 29 | VS. TEXAS A&M        |
| OCT. 6  | VS. ALABAMA          |
| OCT. 13 | VS. OLE MISS         |
| OCT. 20 | VS. TULSA            |
| OCT. 27 | VS. VANDERBILT       |
| NOV. 10 | VS. LSU              |
| NOV. 17 | @ MISSISSIPPI STATE  |
| NOV. 24 | @ MISSOURI           |

## GAME 6 KENTUCKY

When you mention Kentucky sports most people automatically think of basketball, as well they should. But Mark Stoops has made football in the Bluegrass state relevant since he arrived on campus. The Wildcats have earned two bowl bids in the last couple of years and had a couple of upsets over Louisville in '16 and Tennessee in '17. Kentucky is trying to lock down a starting QB as Gunnar Hoak and Terry Wilson have been competing for the job. Benny Snell Jr. is the Cat's best running back and is relied on heavily in moving the ball up and down the field. They field a veteran offensive line that features five players with at least seven starts under their belts. Stoops came into the league with a history of being a good defensive coach but the Wildcats have struggled over the last couple of years and are susceptible on that side of the ball. The Aggies have a lot more talent than UK but will have to avoid the upset bug in this one.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. CENTRAL MICHIGAN  |
| SEP. 8  | @ FLORIDA             |
| SEP. 15 | VS. MURRAY STATE      |
| SEP. 22 | VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE |
| SEP. 29 | VS. SOUTH CAROLINA    |
| OCT. 6  | @ TEXAS A&M           |
| OCT. 20 | VS. VANDERBILT        |
| OCT. 27 | @MISSOURI             |
| NOV. 3  | VS. GEORGIA           |
| NOV. 10 | @ TENNESSEE           |
| NOV. 17 | VS. MIDDLE TENNESSEE  |
| NOV. 24 | @ LOUISVILLE          |

# GAME 7

## S. CAROLINA

Our annual East Division opponent continues to get better and after a nine-win season last year, these guys are for real. Coach Boom always fields a good defense and that should be the case again this year. The difference this season may be in the offensive output of the Gamecocks. Jake Bentley returns as their quarterback and the kid seems to get better every year. Deebo Samuel leads a talented group of receivers and their ground game should be even better than last year. The offense will have a familiar face looking back at them when they come to the line of scrimmage. Nick Harvey, who battled through injuries during his time at A&M, but was able to graduate in May transferred this summer and can start right away. Williams-Brice Stadium can be an intimidating environment and the Ags will need to play their best to win this one.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. COASTAL CAROLINA     |
| SEP. 8  | VS. GEORGIA              |
| SEP. 15 | VS. MARSHALL             |
| SEP. 22 | @ VANDERBILT             |
| SEP. 29 | @ KENTUCKY               |
| OCT. 6  | VS. MISSOURI             |
| OCT. 13 | <b>VS. TEXAS A&amp;M</b> |
| OCT. 27 | VS. TENNESSEE            |
| NOV. 3  | @ OLE MISS               |
| NOV. 10 | @ FLORIDA                |
| NOV. 17 | VS. CHATTANOOGA          |
| NOV. 24 | @ CLEMSON                |

# GAME 8

## MISS. STATE

The Bulldogs went through a coaching change of their own last fall when Dan Mullen left MSU for Florida. Joe Moorhead, who was the offensive coordinator at Penn State, has been welcomed and created a lot of excitement in Starkville. Dual-threat quarterback Nick Fitzgerald returns under center and the Aggies will once again have to figure how to stop the Dogs talented running game. Running back Aeris Williams returns after piling up over 1,100 yards on the ground last year. MSU will once again field a stellar defensive squad led by defensive end Jeffery Simmons and defensive tackle Montez Sweat. Safety Mark McLaurin was named by SEC coaches as one of the best in the league garnering votes to place him on the second-team defensive team. A win over the Bulldogs would be huge for the Aggies.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. STEPHEN F. AUSTIN    |
| SEP. 8  | @ KANSAS STATE           |
| SEP. 15 | VS. LOUISIANA            |
| SEP. 22 | @ KENTUCKY               |
| SEP. 29 | VS. FLORIDA              |
| OCT. 6  | VS. AUBURN               |
| OCT. 20 | @ LSU                    |
| OCT. 27 | <b>VS. TEXAS A&amp;M</b> |
| NOV. 3  | VS. LOUISIANA TECH       |
| NOV. 10 | @ ALABAMA                |
| NOV. 17 | VS. ARKANSAS             |
| NOV. 22 | @ OLE MISS               |

## GAME 9

# AUBURN

Auburn was the only team last year that could say they defeated both teams that made it to the National Championship game. Believe it or not, Coach Malzahn was rumored to be on the hot seat but wound up getting a raise and an extension to keep him at Auburn. Our series with Auburn has seen the visiting team win the game for the last six years. The Ags hope to continue that streak, for at least a year, as they travel to Jordan-Hare to take on the Tigers in game nine. In a surprise move for most experts, quarterback Jarrett Stidham decided to not make himself available for the NFL Draft but to come back for another season. The Tigers return five of his top receivers, which probably made it an easier decision. Auburn also returns the majority of their defense that was ranked as one of the best in the country.



## 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. WASHINGTON           |
| SEP. 8  | VS. ALABAMA STATE        |
| SEP. 15 | VS. LSU                  |
| SEP. 22 | VS. ARKANSAS             |
| SEP. 29 | VS. SOUTHERN MISS        |
| OCT. 6  | @ MISSISSIPPI STATE      |
| OCT. 13 | VS. TENNESSEE            |
| OCT. 20 | @ OLE MISS               |
| NOV. 3  | <b>VS. TEXAS A&amp;M</b> |
| NOV. 10 | @ GEORGIA                |
| NOV. 17 | VS. LIBERTY              |
| NOV. 24 | @ ALABAMA                |

## GAME 10

# OLE MISS

The hammer came down on the Ole Miss program and players were allowed to transfer under the shadow of NCAA penalties. Shea Patterson, the Rebel quarterback, chose to leave and go to Michigan and Jordan Ta'amou looks to take the reigns once again. Matt Luke had the interim tag removed from his title and is responsible for rebuilding the program. They return a slew of talented receivers that can make a lot of noise this fall. They will have to find a replacement for 1,000-yard rusher Jordan Wilkins. The defense gave up lots of yards last season and will have to improve if the team wants to win at least six games. A.J. Brown is one of the best receivers in the country and will need to have a big year. The Aggies will be coming off a tough three-game road schedule and this game is a must-win for the team.



## 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                        |
|---------|------------------------|
| SEP. 1  | VS. TEXAS TECH         |
| SEP. 8  | VS. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS  |
| SEP. 15 | VS. ALABAMA            |
| SEP. 22 | VS. KENT STATE         |
| SEP. 29 | @ LSU                  |
| OCT. 6  | VS. LOUISIANA MONROE   |
| OCT. 13 | @ ARKANSAS             |
| OCT. 20 | VS. AUBURN             |
| NOV. 3  | VS. SOUTH CAROLINA     |
| NOV. 10 | <b>@ TEXAS A&amp;M</b> |
| NOV. 17 | @ VANDERBILT           |
| NOV. 22 | VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE  |

## GAME 11 UAB

After a two-year hiatus, UAB returned to college football and posted an 8-5 record last year. It was truly one of the best stories in sports after alumni and fans came together and fought for them to have football again! Coach Bill Clark may be one of the best coaches in America leading his team to a 6-2 conference record. Quarterback A.J. Erdely tallied 29 touchdowns last year and Spencer Brown returns after rushing for over 1,300 yards to bring home the Conference USA Freshman of the Year award. The Blazers also return most of their best receivers from last year's squad. The defense has some holes to fill as Darious Williams, Shaq Jones and Tevin Crews who were with the team before the program was shut down are now gone. This team is predicted to compete for the conference title and a win against A&M would have Hollywood producers knocking down UAB's doors for the movie rights.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                    |
|---------|--------------------|
| AUG. 30 | VS. SAVANNAH STATE |
| SEP. 8  | @ COASTAL CAROLINA |
| SEP. 15 | VS. TULANE         |
| SEP. 29 | VS. CHARLOTTE      |
| OCT. 6  | @ LOUISIANA TECH   |
| OCT. 13 | @ RICE             |
| OCT. 20 | VS. NORTH TEXAS    |
| OCT. 27 | @ UTEP             |
| NOV. 3  | VS. UTSA           |
| NOV. 10 | VS. SOUTHERN MISS  |
| NOV. 17 | @ TEXAS A&M        |
| NOV. 24 | @ MIDDLE TENNESSEE |

## GAME 12 LSU

Most people agree that we have to give Jimbo time to install his system and fill the team with his players, but a win over LSU would be a huge step forward for this program. The Tigers are still loaded with talent and many experts believe Coach Orgeron is firmly on the hot seat in Baton Rouge. The Ags have not defeated the Tigers since joining the SEC and after they made an unsuccessful run at making Jimbo their head coach, they would love nothing more than to keep the streak going. The Tigers will have to replace their quarterback and best running back from last year and Coach O has also replaced his OC with Steve Ensminger. The defense is still loaded with talent including Greedy Williams in the secondary, who is a first-round NFL talent. Dave Aranda became the highest paid assistant in the country in the offseason and will be motivated to show why. The Aggies host the Tigers and this could be the year we finally get over the hump.



### 2018 SCHEDULE

|         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| SEP. 2  | VS. MIAMI (FL)        |
| SEP. 8  | VS. SOUTHEASTERN LA   |
| SEP. 15 | @ AUBURN              |
| SEP. 23 | VS. LOUISIANA TECH    |
| SEP. 29 | VS. OLE MISS          |
| OCT. 6  | @ FLORIDA             |
| OCT. 13 | VS. GEORGIA           |
| OCT. 20 | VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE |
| NOV. 3  | VS. ALABAMA           |
| NOV. 10 | @ ARKANSAS            |
| NOV. 17 | VS. RICE              |
| NOV. 24 | @ TEXAS A&M           |



# Soccer Preview

## Coach G opens camp with thoughts on his team.

Today is about us becoming us again. We end the season on a 15-game unbeaten run. We return nine starters from a great team last year. There are a lot of expectations from within the team of what we can do. We have to kind of get our timing back up to the speed of play that we like to play at. It was really a terrific start. The new players stepped in. They have all been here since January so they fit right in with what's going on and their speed of play is right up there with everybody else. So there is no reason to be anything but completely confident as we go forward.

## Do you have to mention to the players at the beginning of the season about "Hey we are Texas A&M Soccer" there is a legacy here or is it pretty much expected?

Well as far as the legacy of the program goes, I mean that's why these players are here. Because they want to be a part of something special, a part of something that is different. They showed it today, I'd put us up against anybody on the

first day. Granted we don't have to. Most teams around the country today are running fitness tests and all that, we don't. The culture we have within this program, we don't have to do that. They're fit. They know that if they are not fit they are going to get beat out and they are not going to get to play. So, that culture and those expectations by the players that have been in the program, the players who have now come in, and understand it. Again it's a difference maker for us.

## Can you talk about some players specifically that you are looking forward to stepping up in a leadership role this season?

You have to start with our captains, you know Emily Bates. Who I think is the best player in the league. As far as the way that she thinks, the way that she moves, the danger that she poses in attack. Obviously, Ally Watt I think is the most dangerous player in the league with her pace is impressive. The captains are Bates, Brittany Crabtree, who scored a goal today in practice, and then Grace Piper, who's kind of in the heart of our team. It starts with them,

but we are really a team without class distinctions. We expect our freshmen to talk. We expect them to lead in positions. For example Jordan Burbank, who's our other goalkeeper right now, with Cosette, is a great leader from the back she does a great job there. I'm not trying to avoid the question but we try to recruit leaders from where they have come from so when they step into our environment we don't have to rely on one or two people.

## What does it do for the team to have your leading goal scorer back?

Having goal scorers back changes the confidence that the team plays with. They know that they can score goals and they know they can score goals in key places. You look at our attacking pieces specifically with Bates and you see how Allie Watt stretches a team and then the other players step in there. You know Abby Grace Cooper didn't play last year, we redshirted her and she had a great day today. She brings some really special things in our attack. As does Tera Ziemer who comes in out of California a really smart player who can set up people and can finish it off herself. ■



# A “BIRD’S” EYE VIEW OF AGGIE VOLLEYBALL

BY: ROB HAVENS ‘88



For the first time in 25 years, there is a new leader on the bench for Aggie volleyball. Laura “Bird” Kuhn began her head coaching career in her home state, as she led the Aggies to the first victory of her head coaching career over Ohio University.

Kuhn has assembled a top-notch staff to help her lead our program to the next level. Associate head coach Kolby O’Donnell joins the staff after a previous stint at Louisville. Also joining Bird is assistant coach Wendel Camargo who was previously with James Madison. Ashley Dusek is a volunteer assistant who was a three-time SEC Libero of the year and graduated from Kentucky.

Bird has some holes to fill from last year’s team as the Aggies lost starters Kiara McGee, Kaitlyn Blake and libero Amy Nettles as well as defensive specialist Gabby Litwin. The good news is that the Aggies return seven players with starting experience.

Preseason All-SEC Team selection Hollann Hans and sophomore Camille Connor started all 25 matches last season and will be relied on heavily to lead this team. The lone senior on the squad Amy Houser will serve as team captain this year.

Samantha Sanders, Maddie Douglas, Makenna Patterson and Morgan Davis all return with starting experience. Also returning is local talent and defensive specialist and setter Haley Slocum, who is the granddaughter of former Aggie Football Coach R.C. Slocum.

Redshirt junior Brookah Palmer had to sit out last season due

to NCAA transfer rules but is anxious to contribute this year. A trio of freshmen joined the team in January and earned valuable experience by going through spring drills as well as playing with the team on their European trip this summer. London Austin-Roark, Kaitlyn Rogers and Mallory Talbert will be battling for playing time.

Also hitting the floor for the first time will be Sydney Fields who is a redshirt-junior transfer from North Carolina. Allison Fields, Sydney Little, Skylar Scott and Taylor Voss complete a talented freshmen class for this year’s squad.

The Aggies begin their season on the road for the first six matches as they compete in the D.C. Koehl Classic at Ohio State before traveling to Pennsylvania to battle in the Penn State Classic. The Ags will have their first home match on September 6<sup>th</sup> as they take on Pepperdine in the Texas A&M Invitational.

Coach Bird was asked after her first victory what her thoughts were getting her first win in her home state: “It was fun because our team executed at such a high level after set one. It feels good. I am excited that I have my people here and we have great support from parents, so it is just fun. It feels good for the team in general. That’s fun to do as a team.”

Texas A&M has a tough season ahead and a young squad but the trip to Europe brought this team together and it looks like the sky is the limit for this program. ■

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## Men's Volleyball Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

One of the most successful sport clubs on campus over the last 30 years is the Men's Volleyball Club. The team has won 21 of 29 conference titles and has become a springboard for some of its players to become volleyball coaches for programs around the country.

The club began in the 1970's and was one of the first sport club programs to emerge at Texas A&M. The current team competes in the Southern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association (SIVA) where a few of their biggest rivals are UTSA, Baylor and Texas.

Club president Guilherme Wassano says about 60 players try out each year for 25 coveted spots that make up an A and a B team. He says the club is pretty diverse, with a mix of experienced and first-time volleyball players. The most common incentive for members to join is

the desire to compete.

As for Wassano, joining the squad brought back cherished memories of playing volleyball with his dad as he grew up. "He started me in volleyball young, mainly because he played volleyball himself growing up. So I've played volleyball for a while; I played club ever since the seventh grade, and my dad and I would drive about an hour each way to get to practice and tournaments. So when I heard that A&M had a men's club team, I knew that I wanted to continue playing in college."

The team normally plays in one-day tournaments that start with pool play and then advance to single elimination bracket play. The national tournament has a couple of days of pool play followed by single elimination on the final day.

We asked Guilherme his favorite thing about being a member of the club and he replied, "I would say that my favorite thing would be the sense of family and camaraderie that we have within the club. We are all good friends and get along well with one another. Not

only that, but we also have a really good relationship with the women's team, so we are always cheering each other on and supporting one another."



## Bowling Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Texas A&M Sport Clubs pride themselves on having a club for almost anyone. Some of the clubs have members that have played that particular sport their entire lives and are looking to compete at the highest level. Some clubs have members that have never played before and are just looking to become a part of a community of Aggies that come together to practice, compete and just have a lot of fun together.

According to Bowling Club president Walker Leach, their club has the best of both worlds. "Most students associated with the club have experience, but the club does not accept students based on skill. Anyone who wants to come and bowl will always be accepted for the club. However, students wishing to be on the traveling team will be assessed based on their skill level and assigned to the appropriate team."

Leach told AI that most members join the club because they love the sport of bowling and are looking to improve their skills in the sport. He added, "The club is

very laid back and is fun for anyone who wants to come hang out with a group of students who share a love for bowling."

The club competes throughout the year in several events. The team practices two days a week, on Fridays and Sundays. Last year's squad was comprised of 40 members and had two traveling teams made up of seven members each.

According to Walker, the key to being a great bowler is not necessarily getting all the strikes but instead being skilled at picking up spares. "In an ideal situation, we would be able to throw a strike every time, but as we all know, that does not happen; so it is very important to pick up your spares. As an individual, you transition yourself from a good bowler to a great bowler by improving your ability to pick up your spares consistently."

We asked Leach what his favorite memory of being on the team is and he replied, "The most inspiring and, in my opinion, greatest moment for me was when we scored more pins in a single match against a top five nationally ranked team. Of course, the tournaments are comprised of many games and they went on to finish very high overall in the tournament, but the fact that we bowled

up against a great team and executed our goal of picking up our spares was a great morale builder for our young team."

Walker says they have a great time practicing, competing and hanging out, but his favorite thing is being a part of a club to which he feels he belongs and "knowing any one of them will help you at any time."



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